

Afflictions

by Thomas Brooks

Afflictions are a profitable and necessary part of the Christian life, leading to growth in holiness and a deeper relationship with God.

Scripture: Romans 5:3

Topics: "Afflictions", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Thomas Brooks preaches on the transformative power of afflictions in the lives of God's people, emphasizing that these trials serve to purify, instruct, and draw believers closer to God. He illustrates how afflictions reveal hidden sins, promote holiness, and ultimately lead to greater joy and intimacy with God. Brooks likens afflictions to a furnace that refines and a medicine that heals, asserting that they are essential for spiritual growth and understanding. He encourages believers to embrace their trials, recognizing them as temporary and corrective rather than punitive. Ultimately, Brooks reassures that God's afflictions are merciful and serve a greater purpose in preparing the faithful for eternal glory.

Transcript

All the afflictions which attend the people of God, are such as shall turn to their profit and glorious advantage.

Afflictions discover that filthiness and vileness in sin, which the soul has never yet seen.

Afflictions contribute to the mortifying and purging away of their sins. Afflictions are God's furnace, by which he cleanses His people from their dross. Affliction is a fire to purge out our dross, and to make virtue shine.

Afflictions are medicines which heal soul diseases. Colds and frosts destroy vermin; so do afflictions destroy the corruptions which are in our hearts. The Jews, under all the prophet's thunderings, retained their idols; but after their Babylonish captivity, there have been no idols found among them.

Afflictions are sweet preservatives to keep the saints from sin--which is a greater evil than hell itself.

Afflictions assist to make us more fruitful in holiness. 'But He afflicts us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' The flowers smell sweetest after a shower; vines bear the better fruit, after pruning. Saints spring and thrive most internally when they are most externally afflicted. Afflictions are called by some 'the mother of virtue.' Manasseh's chain was more profitable to him than his crown. Luther

could not understand some Scriptures until he was in affliction.

God's house of correction is his school of instruction. All the stones that hit Stephen's head, did but knock him closer to Christ, the corner-stone.

Afflictions lift up the soul to more rich, clear, and full enjoyments of God. God makes afflictions to be but inlets to the soul's more sweet and full enjoyment of His blessed self.

Christians, by their afflictions, gain more experience of the power of God supporting them, of the wisdom of God directing them, of the grace of God refreshing and cheering them, and of the goodness of God quieting and quickening of them to a greater love to holiness, and to a greater delight in holiness, and to a more vehement pursuing after holiness.

Afflictions keep the hearts of the saints humble and tender. Prosperity does not contribute more to the puffing up the soul, than adversity does to the bowing down of the soul. This the saints by experience find; and therefore they can kiss and embrace the cross, as others do the world's crown. The more the purest spices are beaten and bruised--the sweeter scent and fragrance they send abroad. So do saints when they are afflicted.

Afflictions bring the saints nearer to God, and to make them more importunate and earnest in prayer with God.

Afflictions revive and recover decayed graces; they inflame that love which is cold, and they quicken that faith which is decaying, and they put life into those hopes which are withering, and spirits into those joys and comforts which are languishing. Most men are like a top, which will not go unless you whip it, and the more you whip it the better it goes. You know how to apply it.

Those who are in adversity do better understand Scriptures. The more saints are beaten with the hammer of afflictions, the more they are made the trumpets of God's praises, and the more are their graces revived and quickened. Adversity abases the loveliness of the world which strives to entice us; it abates the lustiness of the flesh within, which strives to incite us to folly and vanity.

The afflictions which attend the saints in the ways of holiness, are but short and momentary. 'Sorrow may abide for a night--but joy comes in the morning' (Psalm 30:5). This short storm will end in an everlasting calm; this short night will end in a glorious day, that shall never have end. It is but a very short time between grace and glory; between our title to the crown and our wearing the crown; between our right to the heavenly inheritance and our possession of the heavenly inheritance. What is our life but a shadow, a bubble, a flower, a runner, a span, a dream?

It will be but as a day before God will give his afflicted ones beauty for ashes, the oil of gladness for the spirit of heaviness; before he will turn all your sighing into singing, all your lamentations into consolations, your sackcloth into silks, ashes into ointments, and your fasts into everlasting feasts!

There are none of God's afflicted ones, who have not their intermissions and respites while under their short and momentary afflictions. When God's hand is on your back, let your hand be on your mouth, for though the affliction be sharp, it shall be but short.

It is mercy that our affliction is not execution--but a correction. He who has deserved hanging, may be glad if he escapes with a whipping.

God's corrections are our instructions,
His lashes are our lessons,
His scourges are our schoolmasters,
His chastisements are our admonitions.

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